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Report on First Quarter Activities of the Legal Information Institute  
of Cornell Law School

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Supported in part by an NCAIR grant of \$27,000 the newly established Legal Information Institute at Cornell has completed its first quarter of activity. In that period it developed supplementary materials to support three important law school courses, developed a prototypical electronic version of a public benefits manual currently distributed in print to legal services offices through New York State by a member of the Cornell Legal Aid Clinic, created a e-mail address directory for legal academia, and placed a server on the Internet. This report provides a short summary of those accomplishments and places them in the framework of our plans for the future.

I. Supplementary Materials

The reasons for focusing on preparation of supplementary materials and statutes in particular are sketched in a separate paper enclosed with this report. With student assistants paid out of the NCAIR grant we prepared three sets of supplementary materials that are being distributed through the Cornell Law School LAN this fall -- An Introduction to Basic Legal Citation, Intellectual Property Statutes, and the U.C.C. Teachers of the respective courses are recommending use of these materials to their students together with (or in lieu of) their print counterparts. The same materials bundled with the new V.I.P version of FOLIO views are offered for individual purchase through the law school bookstore. While the network version allows navigation by hypertext and full text search along with extraction in the form of text files and print, the V.I.P. software permits students with DOS machines (or those able to run DOS applications on a MAC) the capacity to create annotations and their own hypertext linked course notes. The price for the disk which includes a course specific license for the V.I.P. software is \$15 - placing it well within the competitive range of print materials of similar scope.

The citation and intellectual property materials are not only being used at Cornell but are in "beta test" at a few other institutions.

In building educational versions of statutes that private publishers already have in digital form and are marketing securing a data source is a critical first step. This is true even of public domain materials because of the cost and data quality concerns generated by keying in or scanning the texts. This leads us to count as a significant accomplishment our

reaching an understanding with Thomson Publishing that allows the Institute's use of UCSC texts in these educational projects. The intellectual property statutes we have chunked and linked for hypertext use are drawn from USCS with Thomson's permission.

## II. Hypertext and Full Text Searchable Practitioner Materials

Building on our experience creating the Social Security Treatise and database, we worked with a colleague in our legal aid clinic to create a FOLIO version of his Public Benefits Manual. This manual used in our clinic is also distributed in print to a large outside subscriber list. Most of those subscribers are publicly and charitably funded legal services offices throughout New York State. During the summer a questionnaire was distributed to the full list and this fall those who expressed an interest in receiving the manual will receive a sample. Future distributions will offer the manual both in print and on disk. We are exploring arrangements that would allow the electronic version to offer links to a collection of referenced primary materials -- statutes, regulations, and key cases. Because of meagre budgets and enormous caseload this segment of the legal community holds great potential for using computers to improve the delivery of legal information and exchange among offices. Legal services offices in New York have new computers as the result of a recent grant but they find the cost of the online services prohibitive. Development of practitioner materials focused on their needs (largely ignored by the commercial publishers who compete for larger and more lucrative segments of the bar) can, we believe, have a significant beneficial impact. Providing those materials in an electronic form that facilitates integration with individual office projects and work product should also foster more effective exchange of experience among scattered offices.

## III. E-Mail Address Directory

Beginning in June, we set out to solicit e-mail addresses for all AALS law school personnel. By the end of July we were able to report to the Internet community of law school technical support people and law librarians:

...[O]ur directory server is now up and running.

With contributions from many quarters, it contains e-mail addresses for over 850 faculty members, librarians, administrators, and technical people at AALS law schools. There are still 42 schools for which we have no addresses, a larger number for which we have only a few, but the coverage at many schools is quite complete. Schools for which the directory holds 15 or more entries include:

University of Arizona  
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

U.C.L.A.  
University of Chicago  
Cornell  
Georgetown  
Harvard  
University of Montana  
St. Louis University  
Southern Illinois  
Wake Forest  
University of Washington

By September the count of individual entries had begun to crowd 1,000 and several more law schools had joined the "15 or more" honor role including Chicago-Kent and William and Mary. Information in the directory is available to the legal education community in a variety of ways, including importantly, by e-mail. To use the directory by e-mail the procedure is straightforward:

One sends an e-mail message to:  
lookup@fatty.law.cornell.edu

The query can appear anywhere in the message. (But it should not be in the subject line.)

The query can take one of two forms:

query Somebody (for a name search)

or

query institution Somewhere (for a list of people at  
Somewhere)

Multiple requests may appear in one message, one per line.

Interactive queries across the Internet can be carried out by those who can initiate telnet or gopher sessions.

Interactive access is more useful to those with the requisite direct access to the Internet (potentially though not presently all legal academics). The availability of the directory through electronic mail, and therefore through services like CompuServe, ABA/Net, Genie, and MCIMail is significant because it offers a means by which those without direct Internet connectivity (currently, many academics in practical fact and, for some time to come, most practitioners) may access directory services. One can readily visualize other such directories being offered with the practitioners' community as the primary audience. E-mail is but one means of bridging this gap; we are also actively experimenting with dialup access both to service law students and faculty in the Ithaca area and to offer access to Institute resources to a large community which uses the telephone and modem as their primary means of reaching data resources.

The Institute's directory server is, so far as we know, the first discipline-oriented entity of its kind in the world.

#### IV. The Internet Server

At the beginning of the summer, the Cornell Law School acquired a Sun workstation that the Legal Information Institute has used to establish an Internet server. It is here that the e-mail address directory resides. Our creation of the e-mail directory and mounting it on this server is a key element of our long range strategy for building awareness of Internet resources and the availability of the Institute's server in particular. The server is available as a menu choice from with the school's LAN and has therefore opened up the resources of the Internet to faculty and students of Cornell Law School using the friendly interface of the gopher client software. More significantly the server establishes a framework that will allow distribution of educational materials developed here and elsewhere across the Internet, both interactively and through file transfer. During this summer the preliminary steps were taken toward creating software that will provide some of the FOLIO hypertext and search capability across the Internet.

The server currently provides a home for national and international discussion of issues related to the use of computers in law schools via Internet mail groups. TEKNOIDS, a discussion group for law-school computing professionals, now reaches more than 150 subscribers in 8 countries. A task force of the American Association of Law Libraries, formed to address issues related to CD-ROM publication and distribution, uses the server as a home for its discussions. A similar e-mail discussion group for participants in the International Conference on Substantive Technology in Law Schools is planned and will be implemented shortly. We have offered to provide this service to any special interest group within the American Association of Law Schools and the American Association of Law Libraries.

Since beginning to log use of the server, over a thousand different individuals have accessed it using the gopher client-server software, some of them repeatedly. It has been accessed from Japan and from the World Bank. Remote access of the gopher server by telnet across the Internet is not logged but, we know, very popular. It offers such useful access to Internet resources that one non-law person at the University of Pittsburgh uses telnet access to the Institute's server in classes introducing librarians, undergraduates, and others to the Internet.

#### V. Cumulative Impact

Already the educationally focused activities have drawn the attention of legal publishers and the software developers serving them. Two publishers have sent teams to Cornell to see how the Institute's materials are being distributed and how they are

being received by students. Sample disks of the first Institute publications have been favorably received by legal academics.

At the technical level, the activities of the Institute are serving as an example to others in the legal-academic computing community. We have become a source of advice and assistance for others wishing to place information services on the Internet; two other institutions are presently following our lead (Cleveland State and Indiana), with at least one more in the planning stage (University of Arkansas).

## VI. Future Plans and Proposal Renewal

The following projects are on the Institute's agenda for this academic year. We intend to:

- 1) "Roll out" the e-mail directory this fall with messages to all who are in it, letters to all law school deans and librarians, and distribution of a disk based version to all law schools which will include instructions on how to access the Internet version for more up-to-date entries.

- 2) Following this fall's "beta test period" pursue wide distribution of the supplementary materials developed this summer to law faculty and students, experimenting with a variety of distribution paths.

- 3) Continue development of similar materials in other law school courses that involve central texts.

- 4) Complete work on the software that will permit interactivity across the Internet that approximates the FOLIO functionality currently available to users of LANs or stand alone FOLIO courseware.

- 5) Create, working with West Publishing Company, a FOLIO version of a first year casebook together with accompanying materials for the same sort of internal distribution we have developed for the more focused materials.

- 6) Complete and publish the FOLIO version of Barry Strom's Public Benefits Manual.

- 7) Experiment with FOLIO "add on" scholarship, topical materials linked to commercially published CD-ROMs. In New York and numerous other states jurisdictionally defined materials are appearing on disk. When published with FOLIO software these libraries of primary materials can be targets of annotations or law summaries or outlines that link to them. Initial prototype development suggests this form of scholarship has great promise.